

Problems in Pronouncing the English Sounds Faced by the Students of SMPN 2 Halong, Banjar

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Abstract

This study entitled “Problems in Pronouncing The English Sounds Faced By The Students Of SMPN 2 Halong, Banjar” is intended to find out the problems in pronouncing the English sounds faced by the students of SMPN 2 Halong, Banjar.

This research uses qualitative method with contrastive analysis. The data were taken from the recorded students’ voice. The researcher used recording, transcribing and analyzing technique. The researcher analyzed the data: 1. comparing English sounds and students’ pronunciation, 2. finding out the consonant, vowel and diphthong mispronounced by the students, 3. finding out students’ difficulties in pronouncing the English sounds, 4. finding out the students’ problems in pronouncing English sounds, 5. drawing a conclusion. The Subjects of this research are Banjar students of ninth grade at SMPN 2 Halong.

It is found out that the students had problems in pronouncing the English sounds of consonant (/t/, /θ/, /f/, /-t/, /f/, /ʒ/, /-d/), vowel (/v/, /e/, /oo/) and diphthong (/eɪ/, /oo/, /ə r /). The sounds /θ/ are pronounced as [t], /f/ is as [s], /v / as [u], /oo/ as [aw], /ʒ/ as [s], while /t/, /eɪ /, /-t/, /-d/ and /ər/ are pronounced they are written. The error can be caused by the absence of the sound in their mother tongue.

Keywords: *problem; pronunciation*

Background

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language becomes one of compulsory subjects taught in Junior High School. It is formally taught from Junior High School to university level. Even, it becomes a compulsory subject in many universities. It is taught in elementary school as a local subject today. Some kindergartens also introduce English. English has function as a tool of transferring knowledge, which is mostly written in English.

There are some problems of learning English in Indonesia, in the case of vocabulary, speaking, reading, grammar, writing and pronunciation. Pronunciation is one of the most difficult

components in English. Students have problems in pronouncing the sound [ʃ] as in “sheep”, [ʒ] as in “measure”, [θ] as in “think” in which these do not exist in Indonesian. They also find it difficult to say “enough” [f], “our” [ər], “may” [ei], and “mow” [əʊ].

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language to be taught. Indonesian people are influenced by their mother tongue when learning English. Indonesian and English have differences in grammar, phonology and morphology. The system of sound in English and Indonesian language is different.

Indonesia has many local languages. One of them is Banjarese in Kalimantan. Banjarese learn English as their third language. English is their first foreign language. Being non-native speakers who do not use English actively in everyday life, it is quite possible for Banjarese to make errors when they attempt to convey message in English due to the influence of their native language.

According to Richard (1990:232), pronunciation is the way a certain speech sounds in the mouth, pronunciation stresses more on the way of sounds are produced by the hearer. Pronunciation is important in English because mispronunciations will make the hearer misunderstand about the meaning of utterance. Pronunciation is one of the three components of languages, together with grammar and vocabulary. It plays an important part in listening, and speaking skill, so developing students pronunciation is one of the most important tasks for English teachers.

In this study, the researcher tries to find out the problems in pronouncing the English sounds faced by students of SMPN 2 Halong in academic years 2015/2016.

Literature Review

English in Indonesia

Alisjahbana (1990: 322) states that the unsatisfactory results of the teaching of English in Indonesian schools are caused by the lack of atmosphere and of the tradition of the English language culture and by the Indonesian total system of education.

Teaching English

Brown (2002:232) argues that in English language teaching, there are four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing as of paramount importance.

According to Hornby (2009: 20) teaching and learning English involves elements of language such as grammar, lexis, pronunciation, skills, discourse, and genre.

Difficulties in Teaching English

In teaching and learning English there are many components of language that are hard to be mastered: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, discourse and other components (Cook, 1997: 32).

Teaching Pronunciation

According to Goodwin (1996: 103), in “teaching Pronunciation”, the goal of instruction is threefold: to enable our learners to understand and be understood, to build their confidence in

entering communicative situation, and to enable them to monitor their speech based on input from the environment.

1. Feature of Pronunciation

According to Kelly (2000: 1) in pronunciation there are two main features of pronunciation:

- 1) Segmental features or phonemes, which refer to sound units, arranged in a sequential order; or it is about consonant and vowel.
- 2) Suprasegmental features refer to stress, pitch, length intonation and other features that always accompany the production of segmental.

2. Difficulties in Teaching Pronunciation

There are three difficulties in teaching pronunciation. The first is concerned with ear. The need for training the ear to observe and analyze will be clearly perceived when it is realized that accurate imitation is impossible so long as accurate hearing is not achieved. The second is concerned with the matter of learning to make the English speech sounds with our own organs of speech. The last is entirely different: it is that of knowing and remembering the distribution of the speech sounds. (<http://uastudent.com/difficulties-in-teaching-pronunciation/> accessed on November 19, 2015 at 11.00 pm).

3. Techniques in Teaching Pronunciation

Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (1996: 126), for example, recommend numerous techniques for teaching English pronunciation such as (1) listen and imitate, (2) phonetic training, (3) minimal pair drills, (4) contextualized minimal pairs, (5) visual aids, (6) tongue twister, (7) practice of vowels shifts and stress shifts related to affixation, (8) developmental approximation drills, (9) reading aloud/recitation, and (10) recordings of learners' production.

Methodology

This research is aimed at making a contrastive analysis of Banjarese and English, where Banjarese is the first language or L1 (mother tongue and English is a foreign or a second language. In this research, the writer uses a comparative qualitative research method. This research was conducted in SMP2 Halong, Banjar. The data were collected by conducting recording, transcribing and analyzing. The data analyzing technique were done by comparing English sounds and students' pronunciation, finding out the consonant, vowel and diphthong mispronouncing by the students, finding out students' difficulties in pronouncing the English sounds, finding the students' problems in pronouncing English sounds and drawing a conclusion.

Data sources

The data sources used in this research were (1) document, (2) classroom observations, and (3) interviews.

Findings and Discussion

The problems faced by the students of SMPN 2 Halong are in the form of vowel, diphthong and consonant.

1. Consonant

According to O'Connor (1980: 24) there are a few sounds of English consonants which confuse learners. Here are some examples of difficult consonants faced by the students of SMPN 2 Halong.

a. /f/

The sound of /f/ at the end of a word is hard for the learners to pronounce. Here are some examples of the sound /f/ pronounced by the learner.

Table 1

Sound /f/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
1.	/f/	Enough	/ɪ'nʌf/	[enoug]
		Tough	/tʌf/	[toug]
		Rough	/rʌf/	[roug]

The students mispronounced the word “enough, tough and rough”. They pronounced them as [enoug, toug and roug]. The probable cause of these mistakes is the absence of “f” in Banjarese. It can be also the fact that in Indonesian or Banjarese the words are pronounced as they are written. In Indonesian language, the words “staf” is pronounced as [staf], “efektif” is pronounced as “efektif” and “aktif” is pronounced as “aktif”. Those errors probably occurred because Indonesian English learners or Banjarese English learners have different culture from English. In English pronunciation the letter “gh” at the end of a word is mostly pronounced as /f/. In this research the Banjar students pronounced it as [g].

b. /-d/

The sound of /d/ at the end of a word is a problem for the learners. They tend to mispronounce it.

Table 2

Sound /d/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
2.	/-d/	Land	/lənd/	[lan]
		End	/end/	[en]
		And	/ænd/	[an]

The students pronounced the word land /lənd/ as [lan], the word end /end/ as [en] and the word and /ænd/ as [an]. The students of SMPN 2 Halong find difficulties in pronouncing the sound /d/ in the final position. The data above show the differences between a correct English pronunciation and how students of SMPN 2 Halong pronounce those words. For the students, the

sound of /d/ in the final position is hard to be pronounced. It occurred so because the sound of “d” at the end of a word does not exist in Indonesian or Banjarese. They got difficulties to change their pronunciation of those sound, since it is hard to change a habit.

c. /t/

The Indonesian [t] is different from the English /t/. Here are some examples of the sound /t/ pronounced by the learner.

Table 3

Sound /t/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
3.	/t/	Time	/t ^h aɪm/	[taɪm]
		Tall	/t ^h ɔ:l/	[tal]
		Tell	/t ^h el/	[tel]

In pronouncing the words “time, tall and tell” the students continuously pronounced them as “tam, tal and tel. Most Indonesian find the difficulties to pronounce the sound of /t^h/. It is caused by the absence of sound “th” in Banjarese and Indonesian. It also happens when English learners learn Indonesian they cannot pronounce pure “t” in Indonesian. As examples, they pronounce” tahu, tempe, totok as “t^hahu, t^hempe, t^hot^hok.

d. /ʒ/

The sound of /ʒ/ in the middle of a word is a problem for the learner. They tend to mispronounce it.

Table 4

Sound /ʒ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
4.	/ʒ/	Leisure	/ˈleʒ.ə r/	[lesur]
		Measure	/ˈmeʒ.ə r/	[measur]
		Pleasure	/ˈpleʒ.ə r/	[plesur]

In this case the students pronounced the words leisure /ˈleʒ.ə r/ as [lesur]. They pronounced the word measure /ˈmeʒ.ə r/ as [measur] and the word pleasure /ˈpleʒ.ə r/ as [plesur]. It shows that the sound /ʒ/ is pronounced as [s], because Banjarese learners does not have /ʒ/. So Banjar students in SMPN 2 Halong pronounced those words by replacing the sound with /s/. The data above show the differences between correct English pronunciations and how students of SMPN 2 Halong pronounce those words. The sound /ʒ/ is one of the most difficult sounds to be pronounced by students in learning English since Indonesian does not have the sound /ʒ/.

e. /ʃ/

The sound of /ʃ/ is often mispronounced with “s” by learners. Here are some examples of the sound /ʃ/ pronounced by the learners.

Table 5

Sound /ʃ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
5.	/ʃ/	She	/ʃi/	[si]
		Shall	/ʃæl/	[sal]
		Should	/ʃʊd/	[soul]

The students mispronounced the words “she, shall and should” they pronounced them as [si, sal and soul] accordingly. In English pronunciation the letters (sh) is pronounced with /ʃ/ but in this study the Banjar students pronounced the sound /ʃ/ as [s]. Probably the errors occurred because Banjarese and Indonesian don't have /ʃ/ in their consonant. Most students of SMPN 2 Halong have difficulty in pronouncing this English fricative /ʃ/ since this sound is not found in neither Indonesian nor Banjarese. They always substitute [s] for [ʃ]. There is likely to be misunderstanding for their English speech for failure in making a distinction between the two sounds. They will pronounce such a pair of words as ‘sell’ and ‘shell’ in the same way, namely [sɛl], which will be interpreted, by the hearer as a repetition of the same word ‘sell’. The students should be made aware that for the pronunciation of /ʃ/, the lips are rounded.

f. /θ/

The sound of /θ/ is often mispronounced with “t” by the learners. Here are some examples of the sound /θ/ pronounced by the learners.

Table 6

Sound /θ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
6.	/θ/	Think	/θɪŋk/	[ting]
		Thing	/θɪŋ/	[ting]
		Thank	/θæŋk/	[tank]

The table shows that the students pronounced the words think /θɪŋk/ as [ting], the word thing /θɪŋ/ as [ting] and the word thank /θæŋk/ as [tank]. In English pronunciation the letter (th) is pronounced with /θ/ however in this study the Banjarese students pronounced the sound /θ/ as [t]. The error probably occurred because Banjarese and Indonesian don't have the sound in their mother tongue. This happened because in general, /θ/ is categorized as a voiceless dental fricative. /θ/ is another consonantal sound that is typically English sound; therefore, other language like Indonesian does not have this exact sound in their phonetic system. Hence students

of SMPN 2 Halong, as the subject of this research did deviation in pronouncing the sound /θ/ into [t].

g. /-t/

The sound of /-t/ at the end of a word is a problem for Banjar learners. They tend to mispronounce it.

Table 7

Sound /-t/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Consonant	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
7.	/-t/	Best	/best/	[bes]
		Beast	/bi:st/	[beas]
		Test	/test/	[tes]

In this table show that the students mispronounced the words best /best/ as [bes], the word beast /bi:st/ as [bias] and the word test /test/ as [tas]. The errors in pronouncing these sound (-t) were mostly influenced by the speakers' native language. In Indonesia or Banjarese there is no double consonants pronounced in the same time. Indonesians tend to pronounce tes, only without adding "t" at the end. In Indonesian language, the word "pos" is pronounced as "pos", "jas" is pronounced as "jas" and "tas" is pronounced as "tas".

2. Vowel

In learning English the learners with different language backgrounds will face some difficulties to pronounce vowel because of their language background (O'Connor, 1980: 70). Here some examples of difficult vowels faced by the students of SMPN 2 Halong.

a. /e/

The sound of /e/ in the beginning of words is often mispronounced as "i". Here are some examples of the words.

Table 8

Sound /e/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Vowel	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
1	/e/	eight	/eit/	[i:g]
		edit	/'ed.ɪt/	[idit]
		elegant	/'el.ɪ.g ə nt/	[ilegan]

The students pronounced the word eight /eit/ as [i:g], the word edit /'ed.ɪt/ as [idit] and the word elegant /'el.ɪ.gənt/ as [ilegan]. In English pronunciation the letter (e) is pronounced /i/ but in this study the Banjarese students pronounced the sound /e/ as [i]. In this case the students' mispronounced the words probably because of their mother tongue. Banjarese students don't have the sound "e" in Banjarese. In their language they pronounce "sepeda" as "sapida", "sehat" as "sihat" and "selera" as "salira". Most of Banjarese students face such problem because in

Banjarese vowel system has only three vowel (a, i, u). However sometimes there is certain students can pronounce correctly.

Probably the students' mispronunciation above is the result of the over usage of their first language, Banjarese. Most of Banjarese are seldom using Indonesian since they are similar in meaning, however they produced different pronunciation. It also caused, by their habits in their family. They never communicate Indonesian in their daily life, since they believe that their children will study at school.

b. /ʊ/

The sound of /ʊ/ in the beginning of word is often mispronounced "u" by Banjar learner.

Table 9

Sound /ʊ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Vowel	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
2.	/ʊ/	often	/ˈʊf.tən/	[uften]
		office	/ˈʊf.ɪs/	[ufic]
		object	/ˈʊb.dʒɪkt/	[ubjek]

The data above show that the students pronounced the word often /ˈʊf.tən/ as [uften], the word office /ˈʊf.ɪs/ it as [ufic] and the word object /ˈʊb.dʒɪkt/ as [ubjek]. In English pronunciation the letter (o) is pronounced with /ʊ/ but in this study the Banjarese students pronounced the sound /ʊ/ replaced by [u] or sometime [a]. Probably the errors occurred because Banjarese and Indonesian do not have that sound in their mother tongue and their first language. They pronounced "motor" as /mutur/, "botol" as /butul/ and "Honda" as /Hunda/.

3. Diphthong

According to Kelly (2000: 37) diphthong is difficult to pronounce by the learners who do not have it in their native language. Here some examples of difficult diphthong faced by the students of SMPN 2 Halong.

a. /eɪ/

The sound of /eɪ/ at the end of a word is often mispronounced with "ai" by Banjarese. The examples are as follow.

Table 10

Sound /eɪ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Diphthong	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
1.	/eɪ/	May	/meɪ/	[mai]
		Gay	/geɪ/	[gai]
		Say	/seɪ/	[sai]

In pronouncing the word may /meɪ/ the students pronounced as [mai], the word gay /geɪ/ as [gai] and the word say /seɪ/ as [sai]. In English pronunciation the letters (ay) is pronounced /eɪ/

but in this study the Banjarese students pronounced the sound /eɪ/ as [ai]. The English diphthong which does not exist in Banjarese is /eɪ/, which is confusing for the students to grasp. Its sound close to /ai/, in this case, is easier to them, since it is more familiar in their mother tongue. In Indonesian, each letter represents only one sound, so it's easy to read any word from a written text. This error is also caused by inexperience of phonology for the students of SMPN 2 Halong. Students have lack of knowledge in phonetic. They have poor experience in reading the phonetic scripts in the dictionary.

b. /oʊ/

The sound of /oʊ/ in the middle is often mispronounced “aw” by learners. Here are the examples of the sound /oʊ/.

Table 11

Sound /oʊ/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Diphthong	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
2.	/oʊ/	Mow	/moʊ/	[maw]
		Slow	/sloʊ/	[slaw]
		Sow	/soʊ/	[saw]

The table shows that the students get difficulties in pronouncing the words mow /moʊ/ as [maw], the word slow /sloʊ/ as [slaw] and the word sow /soʊ/ as [saw]. In English pronunciation the letters (ow) is pronounced with /əʊ/ but in this study Banjar students pronounced the sound /oʊ/ is replaced by [aw]. Probably the errors occurred because Banjarese and Indonesian do not have that sound in their mother tongue and their first language, so this is the problem that faced by Indonesian learner of SMPN 2 Halong.

c. /ə r/

The sound of /ər/ at the end of a word is a problem for the learners. They mispronounced with “ur”.

Table 12

Sound /ə r/ Pronounced by the Learner

No	Diphthong	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Students' voice
3.	/ə r/	Our	/aʊə r /	[our]
		Hour	/aʊə r /	[hour]
		Honour	/ˈɒn.ə r /	[honour]

In this case the table show that the students mispronounced the words “our, hour and honour” as /our/, /hour/ and /honour/. The probable cause of these mistakes is the absent of the sound /ə r/ in Banjarese. This can be also the fact the Indonesian or Banjarese the words are pronounced as they are written. In Banjarese there is no sound /ər/ so they pronounced with the

similar sound they have. The mother tongue and the first language give a big effect for other language. It can lead the negative transfer for the foreign language learners.

Conclusion

Related to the formulation of the problem and the objectives of the study as stated in chapter I, finally the researcher comes to the conclusion that the students of SMPN 2 Halong have difficulties in pronouncing English sounds of consonant (/t/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /-t/, /f, /ʒ /, /-d/), vowel (/ɒ/, /e/, /oʊ/) and diphthong(/eɪ/, /oʊ/, /ə r /). The sounds /θ/ are pronounced as [t], /ʃ/ is as [s], /ɒ / as [u], /oʊ/ as [aw], /ʒ/ as [s], while /t/, /eɪ /, /-t/, /-d/ and /ər/ are pronounced they are written. The error can be caused by the absence of the sound in their mother tongue.

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